

## **Is it necessary to send a press kit when pitching a story to the media?**

Q: What's in a press kit? Is it necessary to send one with a book when pitching a story to the media?

A basic press kit publicizing a new book generally consists of a pitch letter designed to get an editor excited about the book, a press release explaining why the book is newsworthy, and an author biography. With illustrated books the illustrator's biography may also be included. More elaborate kits are likely to include these elements plus additional material of interest to a particular editor or producer. For example, discussion questions in a Q & A format can be helpful to television and radio producers for on-air conversation. Tip sheets and trivia are ideal for smaller magazines and newspapers who work on a tight schedule and like to have extra material on hand in case they need to fill space at the last minute. Surveys, topical articles and statistics can provide media contacts with the angles they need to build an interesting subject into a feature story.

While a press kit can provide an editor or producer with a variety of story angles, a well-written pitch letter explaining why a book and author should be of interest to a particular editor can go a long way. If it is the only item going out with the book, the pitch letter should include a paragraph that explains why the book is newsworthy and at least a few sentences about the author's and/or illustrator's background.

In either case, keep in mind that the best results are achieved when telephone contact is done after the mailing to follow up on the materials sent. 7:8/92